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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



DEVELOPMENT AND
DEPLOYMENT OF
THE HUCHWAN HYDROFOIL
TORPEDO BOAT

TCS-20161/68

MARCH 1968

COPY 118

4 PAGES

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DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE HUCHWAN HYDROFOIL TORPEDO BOAT

A probable Chinese-built Huchwan hydrofoil torpedo boat (PTH) was photographed at the Ha Tou Boat Repair Facility, North Vietnam, on

[REDACTED] This is the first identification of a new class of Chinese Communist naval combatant in North Vietnam since three P-6 motor torpedo boats were identified on low level photography at Hai Phong Port in the spring of [REDACTED]. The transfer of the Huchwan PTH indicates continuing Chinese naval support of North Vietnam.

Chinese South Sea Fleet Huchwan PTH units, which appear to be identical to the recently sighted North Vietnamese vessel, measure approximately [REDACTED] maximum width, with a hull beam of [REDACTED]. Its armament consists of [REDACTED] torpedo tubes and two light caliber automatic weapons mounted in circular splinter shields (one abaft the deckhouse, the other near the stern). The U.S. Naval Scientific and Technical Intelligence Center estimates the vessel to have a speed of slightly over 40 knots and to have greater speed and stability in rough water than the older P-6 PT boats.

The Chinese have provided North Vietnam with three types of first line, relatively modern, military vessels since the beginning of American bombing in 1965. [REDACTED] Four Shanghai fast patrol boats (PTF) were observed in North Vietnam for the first time. In late [REDACTED] at least 16 small logistics vessels (SL-1) were provided to North Vietnam and were first observed in the resupply efforts during the Tet Truce in [REDACTED]. The first P-6 were observed in North Vietnam. And now, [REDACTED] the Huchwan PTH has been provided.

[REDACTED] a portion of the building way area at the Shanghai Shipyard, Hu-tung, China, was enclosed by a security fence. This area has subsequently been used for continuous production of small combatants, the Huchwan PTH being the most significant of these vessels. The first available photograph of a Huchwan PTH was taken at the downstream fitting-out wharf in [REDACTED]. This unit was fully outfitted, indicating construction on it had begun by at least [REDACTED]. Serial production of the unit at the Hu-tung shipyard was observed on aerial photography of [REDACTED] but the units were not identified as hydrofoils until ground photography of [REDACTED] was received (Figure 1). The production rate was increased in [REDACTED] as evidenced by the increased utilization of building way space at the shipyard. Possible and confirmed Huchwan PTH observed on aerial photography of [REDACTED] at Wuhu Shipyard North and Wuhu Shipyard, 250 miles inland on the Yangtze River, may indicate at least limited production of the units at these shipyards. Both shipyards

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are capable of serial production of this type of vessel.

25X1D The Huchwan PTH may have a fiberglass hull, which would be a significant departure from normal Chinese Communist patrol boat construction methods. Indications of possible fiberglass construction include a hull-shaped possible female mold observed on one of the Huchwan building ways at Hu-tung shipyard in [] the practice of repairing hulls with elliptical patches (instead of rectangular plates normally used to repair wooden or steel hulls), and the external reinforcing of the hull where the main foil struts and auxiliary appendages are attached (Figure 2).

Prior to the North Vietnam sighting, the Huchwan PTH had been observed only in China. It would seem to be an entirely indigenous effort, one of the most recent successful Chinese-designed units, designed to overcome some of the shortcomings of conventional PT units by employing a forward stabilizing hydrofoil.

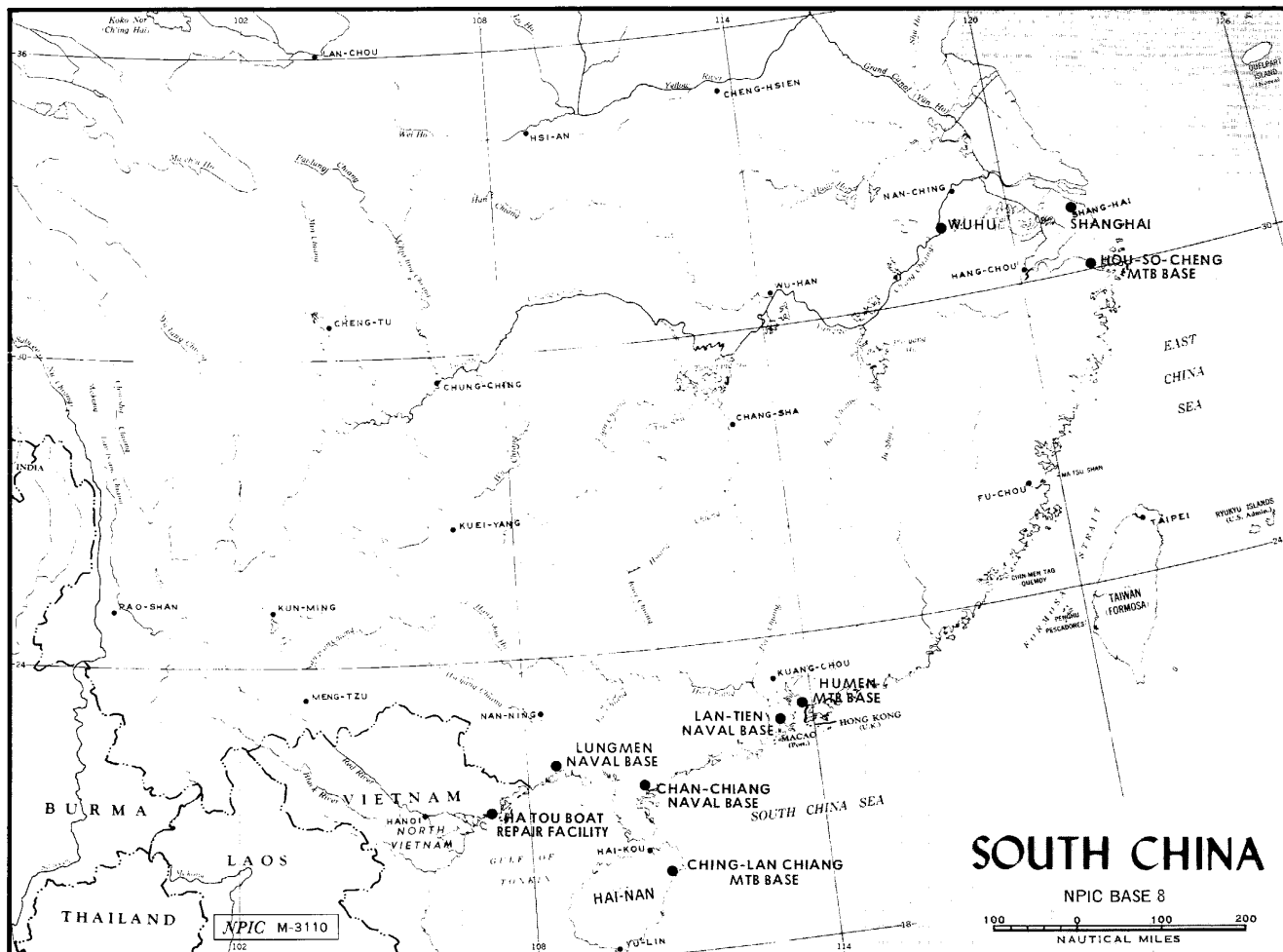
25X1D Huchwan PTH units deployed to the Chinese South Sea Fleet have not been used to replace older units, but have been deployed to naval bases not previously used for motor torpedo boats (MTB), Lan-tien Naval Base, Chan-chiang Naval Base, and Humen Naval Base. The only significant change in MTB order of battle was observed at the Ching-lan Chiang Motor Torpedo Boat Base, on the northeast side of Hainan Island, where in [] the P-6 PT order of battle was reduced to approximately 50 percent of its previously observed strength. The Chinese East Sea Fleet has deployed the units only at Hou-so-cheng Motor Torpedo Boat Base, where the Huchwan was used to replace P-6 PT units. Three Huchwan PTH were observed on flatcars on a rail siding in a secured POL storage area adjacent to Lai-pei Airfield, near Chan-chiang, indicating these units have been transferred by rail from the East Sea Fleet area to the South Sea Fleet. [] two probable Huchwan PTH were observed at the Lungnen Naval Base, at the head of the Gulf of Tonkin near the China/North Vietnam border. Their presence here may be related to the eventual transfer of Huchwan units to North Vietnam.

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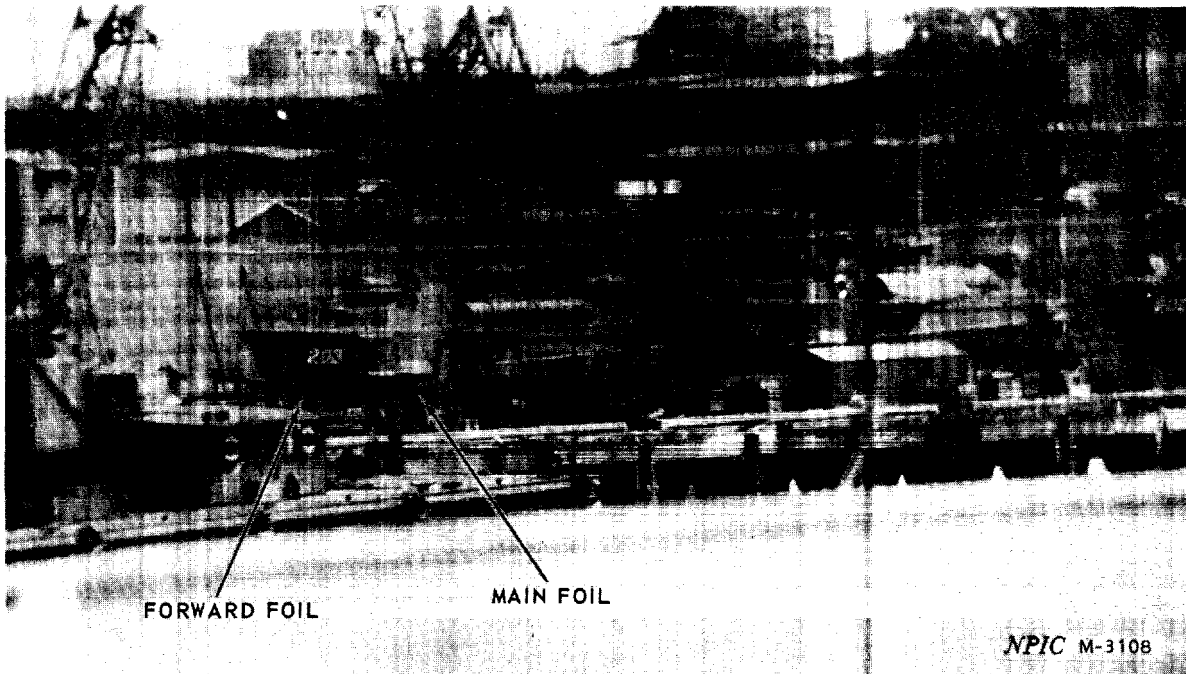


FIGURE 1. COMPLETED HUCHWAN PTH AT SHANGHAI SHIPYARD, HU-TUNG, CHINA.

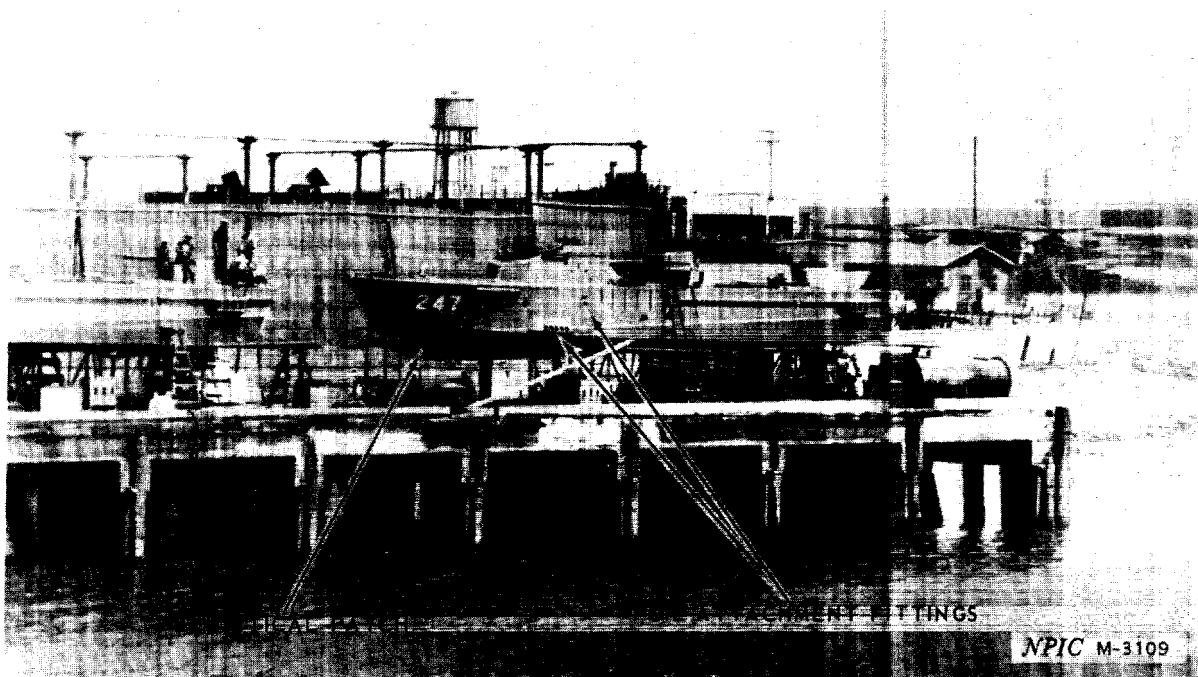


FIGURE 2. HUCHWAN PTH FITTING-OUT AT SHANGHAI SHIPYARD, HU-TUNG, CHINA.

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